

Remarks

I. Introduction

Claims 15 to 30 are pending in the present application. In view of the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants note with appreciation the acknowledgement of the claim for foreign priority and the indication that all certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

II. Double Patenting Rejections

Regarding the double patenting rejections, while these rejections are not agreed with, to facilitate matters, Applicants are prepared to file Terminal Disclaimer(s) upon withdrawal of all other rejections and an indication that the present application is otherwise in condition for immediate allowance.

III. Rejection of Claims 15, 17 to 27 and 29 to 30 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 15, 17 to 27 and 29 to 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Weyl. Applicants respectfully submit that Weyl does not anticipate claims 15, 17 to 27 and 29 to 30 for at least the following reasons.

Claim 15, for example, includes a feature of a spring element having a groove that is not anticipated by the thin wire rings of Figures 2C through 2E of Weyl. As such, Weyl does not disclose every feature of claim 15, or its dependent claims 17 to 27 and 29 to 30. Withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

IV. Rejection of Claims 15 to 25 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 15 to 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kojima. Applicants respectfully submit that Kojima does not anticipate claims 15 to 25 for at least the following reasons.

Claim 15, as more fully explained above, includes a feature of a spring element having a groove, which is not anticipated by the insulating spacers of Kojima. As such, Kojima does not disclose, or even suggest, each and every claim element of claim 15, or its dependent claims 16 to 25. Withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

V. Rejection of Claim 16 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Weyl in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,082,175 ("Yoshikawa"). Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Weyl and Yoshikawa for not render unpatentable claim 16.

Claim 16 depends from claim 15 and therefore incorporates all of the features of claim 15. As more fully explained above with respect to claim 15, Weyl does not disclose a spring element having a groove. Neither does Yoshikawa cure this deficiency of Weyl. Therefore, the combination of Weyl and Yoshikawa does not disclose, or even suggest, all of the features of claim 15, or its dependent claim 16. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

VI. Rejection of Claim 28 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claim 28 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over either Weyl or Kojima. Applicants respectfully submit that neither Weyl or Kojima render unpatentable claim 28 for at least the following reasons.

Claim 28 depends from claim 15 and therefore incorporates all of the features of claim 15. As more fully explained above with respect to claim 15, neither Weyl nor Kojima discloses a spring element having a groove. Therefore, neither Weyl nor Kojima discloses, or even suggests, all of the features of claim 15, or its dependent claim 28. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

VII. Conclusion

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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